

# LETTER OF REPROOF

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Mr. John Cleaveland of Ipswich,

OCCASIONED BY

## A defamatory Libel

Published under his Name,

INTITLED,

An Essay to defend some of the most important Principles in the Protestant reformed System of Christianity, &c.— against the injurious Aspersions cast on the same, by *Jonathan Mayhew*, D. D. in his late Thanksgiving Sermons on Psalm CXLV. 9. In which, &c.

By JONATHAN MAYHEW, D.D.

Pastor of the West Church in *Boston*.

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— Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him. *Levit. XIX. 17.*

— If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him—*Lev. XVII. 3.*

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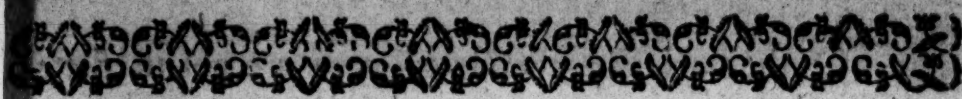


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# A LETTER, &c.

BOSTON, Jan. 17, 1764.

Mr. Cleaveland,

**B**Y the great vanity which you discover, and the self-important airs which you assume thro'out your slanderous *Essay*, I conclude you supposed that I would either enter the lists with you as a shrewd polemical writer, or else be wholly silent, from a conviction of my inability to defend the sermons which you have attack'd in so heroic a manner. But if you imagined either of these things, you was under a mistake. If ever I enter into a formal controversy with any person upon such points, it shall be with One, who appears to me to have both a better head, and honest heart than you have discovered in this specimen of your abilities, and zeal for what you call orthodoxy. And yet I do not think it convenient to be quite silent upon this occasion. Tho' my sermons need no elaborate, argumentative defence against your ratiotinations, and impertinent criticisms; yet so much rudeness and insolence, so much misrepresentation and slander, falsehood and forgery as your libel contains, should not, methinks, be passed over without some animadversions: Especially since it is probable that this will be read chiefly by those who have never seen the sermons aforesaid; and who may be so ignorant of you, as to imagine you had too much integrity and honor to misrepresent and falsify them. It is partly upon this consideration, that I give you and myself the present trouble; my principal aim being, not to dispute with, but to chastize and admonish you, for your real good; and to make you an example and warning to others. If in doing this, I should transiently touch upon the merits of  
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the cause, theologically considered, you are not to flatter yourself, that I mean to controvert such points with you ; whom I consider as a person wholly unworthy to be reasoned with about them, any farther than is requisite to shew your dishonesty and wickedness with reference to them.

If I had really published any material errors in point of doctrine, let me tell you, Mr. *Cleaveland*, that you was one of the most unsutable persons in the world, to undertake a confutation of them, or to set yourself up for an author, tho' you say, p. 4, that you have 'an undoubted right' to do it. I am sensible that British subjects have a legal right to *expose themselves* in print, on politics, divinity, or any other subject : And if this is what you insist on as an invaluable privilege, I would by no means have your liberty, or that of the press restrained. But you speak, p. 3. of 'Divines of indisputable ability for such an undertaking', as that of *vindicating the truth against me*. Can you then possibly think it became you, an obscure person from another province, and one so unletter'd as you are ; an out-cast from the college to which you was a disgrace ; for some time a rambling itinerant, and promoter of disorders and confusion among us ; so raw and unstudied in divinity ; one hardly ever heard of among us, but in the frequent reports of your follies and extravagances, and at length set up as a minister to an assembly of separatists ;—Can you possibly think it became you to turn author upon this occasion ; and to take this supposed necessary work of defending the *most important principles* of the protestant religion against me, out of the hands of *our Divines of indisputable ability* ? What unaccountable vanity and infatuation was this ! And you have presumed to pass an implicit censure on those *Divines* also, by saying, p. 3. 'I marvel that none of our divines of indisputable ability for such an undertaking, have attempted to vindicate the truth against him'—Is not this a proof, that none of our *able Divines* thought there was any *occasion* for opposition to me ? And do not you shew the utmost assurance, in thus setting up your *little self* in opposition to their opinion, as well as



to my sermons? Poor, unhappy man! You doubtless thought to emerge from your obscurity, and to appear as a person of some consequence, by this vain attempt. But you have great reason to wish, you had continued as unnoticed as ever: For it were much better to remain as unknown as heretofore, than to be only more *infamous*; as you are at least in a fair way now to be, by means of your libel.

If it were my intention to write to you as a scholar, logician or divine, I would take some notice of the confusion and want of method, so apparent thro'out your *Essay*; the needless and numberless repetitions therein; and your running the proposed heads of it into each other: So that one had almost as good look for what you propose under any particular one, under any of the other, as that. This is particularly observable with respect to the three *latter* of them, which are the principal. And even under your *first*, the design of which, you say, is, to mention several things in which you "agree" with me\*, you mention near as many, I think, in which, you say, we *disagree*. But it is as much beneath me to play the *critic* on such a performance as yours, as it would be particularly to expose the vanity of your criticisms on my sermons. Let me here only just observe by the way, that if I agree with you in so many things as you say I do, this is a better presumptive evidence, that I am under some *mistakes*, than any which you have produced. For I can hardly suppose it possible for any one to be of your opinion in many points of doctrine, without being in the *wrong* with respect to some.

But I will now proceed to the main business of this Letter, which is, to set your falsehood, and iniquitous proceedings with reference to my sermons, in some order *before*

\* Thus it is expressed p. 4. 'I. Mention several things, we agree with the Dr. in'. So p. 7. 'Yea, we stick not to say'—p. 95. 'Our system of doctrine'—97. 'Another principle of our system'—After this manner he speaks in numerous other places: we, our, us, &c. As if all this wrong headed creature's whimsies were the common cause of protestants, and himself a distinguished champion therefor. Who can help smiling at the folly and impertinence of this, that is not too much provok'd at the insolence & arrogance of it?

before your eyes ; and to administer the reproof and correction which you deserve ; or rather a *part* thereof. For it is only they that hold the sword of *public* justice, that can legally punish such wickedness to the *extent* of its demerits. Your villainy in this affair appears written, as one may say, even upon your forehead ; I mean in your title-page : In which you have the assurance to represent me to the world, as an enemy to ‘ the most important principles’ of the protestant religion ; particularly ‘ the doctrine of Christ’s sacrifice and atonement’, &c. On which, you there say, I cast ‘ injurious aspersions’. After the word *atonement*, you indeed insert these clauses, *viz.* ‘ as being absolutely necessary to the pardon of sin, consistently with God’s infinite and unchangeable *rectitude*’ ; —that you might have an hole to creep out at. But this will not serve your turn. You know, Mr. Cleaveland, in your conscience, that I did not deny any necessity of atonement, arising from wisdom, fitness, the ends of government, or the moral character of God ; but rather said what implies it, as will hereafter appear to your confusion, unless you are past all shame. How then could you have the confidence, because my expressions concerning atonement do not exactly correspond with yours, to represent me to the world, as casting ‘ injurious aspersions’ on it ? by which you doubtless intended something beyond a simple denial of it. But it must be observed, that I am charged, in this villainous title-page, with *injuriously aspersing* other important doctrines of the gospel, besides that of Christ’s atonement ; unless you will say, that there are some ‘ most important principles in the protestant reformed system of christianity’, which are not themselves real and important doctrines of the gospel ; and therefore, that I may be supposed to *aspersion* the former, tho’ I maintain the latter : Which, I conclude, you will not say. Indeed, nothing is more manifest, than that it was your formal intention to *aspersion* me, as an enemy to some of the most fundamental doctrines of the christian religion ; which you accordingly *essay* to *defend* against the supposed injurious aspersions cast on them in my sermons. You must be sensible, that this is a very high charge to be brought against



gainst one who is, at least by his station and profession, a minister of the gospel. But I have the less reason to be any ways uneasy at your dislike of my sermons, because I think it pretty evident that you do not well like the *text* itself, in its plain, literal sense; or, in other words, that you do not really believe, 'The Lord is good to ALL, and his tender mercies over ALL his works.' Had you believed this to be strictly true, I do not think you would (I am sure you could not *consistently*) have made such a tragical out-cry against those discourses.

But having made these cursory remarks on the iniquity of your title-page, as well as the vanity of your introduction, and the impertinence and confusion of your *first* head; I shall now pass on to your *second*: which is thus expressed in your libel, p. 9. 'To take notice of the Dr's *evident design*.' And this, you immediately add, was, 'To represent the divine goodness in such a light as to shew, there was no absolute necessity for the sacrifice of Christ to make atonement, or to satisfy\* divine justice, in order to God's forgiving the sins of men consistently with his moral goodness'. Upon which let it be remarked in the first place,

That if I had, in express terms, asserted the non-necessity of atonement or satisfaction, in order to the forgiveness of sin; this would have been no more than some eminent protestant Divines have done; even *Calvinistical* Divines; whom, I conclude, you account the most *reformed* of any. I will particularly mention but one of them; the famous Dr. *Twisse*, who was in such high reputation with the *Assembly of Divines at Westminster*, that he was chosen and served as *Prolocutor*, or *Chairman* of that venerable assembly. And his opinion ought, perhaps, to have

\* It should be remembered, that the scripture makes use of no such language as this, of Christ's *satisfying divine justice*, in any one place. However, the author of this letter is far from having any disposition to contend about mere words. If those who express themselves after this manner, intend no more by the *satisfaction* of Christ, than is implied in his *sacrifice* or *atonement*, (as they ought not to do) he makes no objection against it; but asserts the doctrine of satisfaction himself, in this sense; as is evident even from those sermons which have been attack'd in so outrageous a manner.

have almost as much weight as that of Mr. Cleaveland of Ipswich. The Dr. has nine folio pages in his *Vindiciæ Gratiæ*, &c. upon this point; beginning p. 198. under the head *De Electione*; the eighth Digression, as he terms it: In quâ probatur posse Deum per potentiam absolutam vel CITRA SATISFACTIONEM peccata remittere, simulque ad Lubberti & Piscatoris contrasentientium rationes respondetur. Which, for the sake of you, Mr. Cleaveland, and my other English readers, I here translate—*In which it is proved, That God can forgive sins by his absolute power, even WITHOUT SATISFACTION; and also the reasonings of Lubbertus & Piscator, who think otherwise, are answered.* It immediately follows, 'Posse Deum vel citra satisfactionem peccata remittere, juxta potentiam ejus absolutam, adeo manifestum mihi videtur, ut extra controversiam ponendum esse facile censerem'. i. e. *That God can forgive sins even without satisfaction, by his absolute power, appears so manifest to me, that I should think it a point which ought to be placed beyond all controversy.* Afterwards, 'Si Deus non possit peccata sine satisfactione remittere; tum vel quia non potest per potentiam, vel quia non potest per JUSTITIAM. At neutrum horum dici potest', &c. i. e. *If God cannot forgive sins without satisfaction; this is either because he cannot, with respect to power, or because he cannot, in respect of JUSTICE. But neither of these things can be affirmed, &c.* From hence it is manifest, that this eminent Calvinistic Divine, in high repute with the Westminster Assembly, for which you express so great a veneration, was full and positive in his opinion, that sin might have been forgiven without any satisfaction; and particularly, that the justice of God did not indispensibly require it. This he thought so plain a point, that it ought not to be called in question. If, therefore, I had as expressly asserted the same thing, did it become you,—I say, you, Mr. Cleaveland, to inveigh against me for it; and to load me with so much obloquy? Could you not differ from me in opinion, and yet observe some sort of decorum and modesty in your opposition?

But let me remind you in the next place, that I did not assert the possibility of forgiveness without atonement.

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So far from it, that the manner in which I expressed myself upon this point, rather implied a *moral* necessity thereof in order to forgiveness: And surely you will not assert any other kind of necessity, or a *natural* one, as contradicting from *moral*. At least, I am persuaded that no man who understands what he says, supposes any other: What *you* may do, I cannot say.---That I denied not such a necessity, but rather supposed it, will fully appear hereafter; together with your wilful falsehood and iniquity with reference hereto.

IN the mean time, I shall make a remark or two on the method which you take to prove that I had the *design* aforesaid. You infer this from what I said of divine justice, considered as a branch or mode of goodness; which opinion of mine you suppose, without any reason, to be inconsistent with the doctrine of atonement. But what an iniquitous method of proceeding is this? Upon supposition I was mistaken about divine justice, (which I am persuaded no man can prove) is this a sufficient ground to charge me with such a *design* as you speak of? This is the same kind of dishonesty, that it would be in any one to accuse you of deism or atheism, because he supposed some of your principles, being pursued into their just consequences, would terminate therein; which probably may be the case. But yet I should think it injurious to charge you with a design to propagate deism or atheism, while you profess the contrary; even tho' you have shewn so little regard to truth and integrity, as you have done in many parts of your libel. One instance hereof may indeed be found in this part of it, p. 9. Where you insinuate that I hold *every* act of punitive justice in God, to be intended for the good of the *individual*, on whom it terminates. You say, 'Now if justice, even punitive justice in God, is only a mode or modification of his goodness, or kindness and beneficence towards his creatures, then the great end (as the Dr. says it is) of God's exercising punitive justice, must be "the good of his creatures," and even the good of *those that it is exercised upon*; and hence *every* act of punitive justice must be an act of kindness, "for it is goodness

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"itself that gives the blow." Here you refer to Serm. p. 21. Now would not any one who never read my sermons, and took you for an honest man, conclude from hence, that I supposed it would be unjust for God to punish any sinner more than would be for his *own* good? Indeed you say expressly, p. 10. that according to my principles, 'God would not be perfectly good but cruel, if he should punish them' [sinners] 'any farther than would be for *their* good or happiness'—Now are you not ashamed, Mr. *Cleaveland*, of such prevarication as this? I did indeed compare God's acts of punitive justice to those of a wise and good earthly parent or sovereign; who has always *some* good or benevolent design in punishing. But then I expressly guarded, as you know, against the supposition, that all acts of punitive justice, whether in God or man, are acts of kindness to the suffering individuals. That those who have never read my sermons, may see it is not without good reason that I accuse you of dishonesty in this respect, I shall here extract a few passages from them, out of many to the same purpose.

SPEAKING of the motive from which a wise and good parent punishes his children, when he is under the influence, not of mere *passion*, but of reason only, I say, 'Is it not in order to reform, and do them good?—or at least with a view to the benefit of his other children, or those of the household;—that they may be kept under due subjection, &c.——So that in a good parent, as was said before, there is no such quality as justice, *really distinct from goodness*; not even in punishing: *For it is goodness itself that gives the blow*,' Serm. p. 21. This last clause you dishonestly introduce, as if I had not only used it expressly concerning God; but had thereby intended to assert, that he never punishes a sinner, but for his *own* good, in distinction from the *public* or *common*: And is not this a wicked, wilful perversion of my evident meaning? Again:

SPEAKING just after, of a wise and good earthly sovereign, I expressed myself thus,—'Neither does he inflict any punishments, but what he considers as needful for the support of his government;—if not for the particular good



‘good of *those that suffer*, as in capital cases, yet for the  
 ‘good of his *people in general*, by way of example and  
 ‘terror, that good order may be preserved. So that even  
 ‘in this case of excision, or capital punishment, the justice  
 ‘of the sovereign is no real quality in him, distinct from  
 ‘goodness. It is goodness, or a regard to *common good*,  
 ‘that takes off the head of the traitor,’ &c. p. 21, 22.  
 It is afterwards observed, that God is often represented to  
 us in scripture under the characters of a Father and a King;  
 ‘the *wisest* and *best* Father, the *wisest* and *best* King,’ p. 23,  
 24. And after quoting Heb. XII. 6—12. where God is  
 represented as chastening us ‘for our profit,’ I go on thus,  
 p. 25. ‘No man will deny, but that God is at once just  
 ‘and good in these chastenings. Goodness and justice in  
 ‘him, therefore, are not to be considered as *opposites*:  
 ‘They *may*, in all other cases without exception, be co-  
 ‘incident; the latter being, *perhaps*, only a particular  
 ‘modification of the former, and tending to positive good,  
 ‘at least the *public or common*.’ And you your self, Mr.  
 Cleaveland, know, and have often acknowledged, particu-  
 larly p. 15. that I speak of the *future* punishment of  
 wicked men in the language of scripture, as *eternal, ever-*  
*lasting*, &c. How then could you have so much dishonesty  
 and impudence, as to represent it to the world as my  
 doctrine, or at least implied in my doctrine concerning  
 divine goodness, that *every* act of punitive justice in God,  
 is an act of kindness to the individual punished; or that  
 God’s end therein is the good even ‘of those, that it is  
 ‘exercised upon’? Was not this very foolish also, as well  
 as injurious? For do you think you can make the world  
 believe that I either asserted or supposed, it was for the  
 good of sinners themselves to be *eternally* punished? For  
 shame, Mr. Cleaveland; what do you think of yourself?  
 Or what opinion do you suppose the world can have, either  
 of your sense or honesty in this respect? You proceed  
 upon the same *known* false supposition, when you so pertly  
 demand, p. 10. ‘And if God’s punitive justice is positive  
 ‘kindness, or if *all* his acts of punishing, are acts of positive  
 ‘kindness, how could the sufferings of Christ, the just for

‘the unjust, be an effect of God’s love, mercy and grace?’  
 ‘Is it an act of love, mercy and grace, to *withhold from sinners an act of positive kindness?*’ Fye! Mr. Cleaveland. You know that, according to my principles, sinners may be justly punished by way of terror and example to others, for the support of government, order and *common* good, tho’ themselves are not benefitted, nor designed to be benefitted thereby. And Christ’s atonement, or his suffering, the just for the unjust, or in the room, place or stead of sinners, (which I suppose the true, natural import of that expression) was not in order to their being exempted from any disciplinary correction, or medicinal punishment, for their real good; (for thus the saints are corrected, or punished, notwithstanding Christ suffered for them) but in order to their being exempted from that punishment, to which they might otherwise have been subjected, in order to vindicate the honor of God’s law and government; for the support of order, and therein for the good of the universe, which essentially depends thereon. And if these ends may be answered by the sufferings of a mediator or substitute, as I suppose, I hope you will allow it to be an ‘act of love, mercy and grace,’ to appoint a mediator to suffer thus, in order to prevent our suffering personally, by way of example and warning, as malefactors do in the case of capital punishment; tho’ it would not be an act of love, mercy and grace, ‘to withhold from sinners an ‘act of *positive* kindness,’ or any punishment which is for their good; as you, at once with equal folly, effrontery and malice, suggest it would be, upon my principles.

You go on with your imaginary proof of the *design* imputed to me; but really, only in further exposing the naughtiness of your heart. You say, ‘This design farther appears from what the Dr. says in p. 64 and 65; where he plainly intimates, that there was no necessity of the atonement of Christ, in reference to *any such divine justice in God*, that must be satisfied by the sufferings or death of Christ, that men might be pardoned or saved; “such idea of divine justice, must be wholly and forever excluded,”—Libel, p. 10. The last clauses here, with  
 double



double comma's, you cite as mine; tho' they are altered, so as not to give your readers a true idea of my meaning. You have here the confidence to insinuate, that I denied the atonement of Christ had any reference to the justice of God, the honor of his law and government; or was designed to exempt sinners from that punishment, which must otherwise have been inflicted upon them. This is your manifest intention; and yet it is absolutely false, and you know it to be so. You know that in the places, to which you refer, I did not speak of divine justice in general, as if Christ's sufferings had no reference thereto; but only of a particular notion of justice, as if it were in nature wholly and absolutely distinct from goodness; for which, I suppose, there is no foundation in reason or scripture. But, instead of fairly quoting my words, you had the dishonesty to mutilate them in such a manner, as to give your unwary readers quite a wrong conception of my meaning; as if I had, in general terms, denied *any* justice in God, to which the satisfaction [atonement] of Christ had reference, in order to the pardon of sin. Are you not ashamed of such a wicked artifice as this, at once to slander me, and impose upon your readers?

You proceed in the same page, viz. 10. to cite me thus, in order to prove your point: I shall transcribe the sentence just as it stands in the libel—"We are assured (says he) in the holy scriptures, that God forgives the sins of men thro' this great sacrifice (of Christ) intervening, *rather* than without any." This is your pointing; here you make a period for me, where I made only a comma, the sense being incomplete. It immediately follows in the sermon, p. 64. after the comma at the word *any*,---"not 'because he is deficient in goodness, or not perfectly 'merciful, but because he is infinitely *wise* as well as merciful; taking such a method herein, as is in its nature 'admirably adapted to "magnify the law and make it "honourable," i. e. to beget and preserve in the minds of 'reasonable creatures a just sense of God's authority, the 'dignity of his laws and government: Which, as was intimated before, is evidently best even for themselves."

Now,

Now, had you quoted the sentence intire, instead of mutilating it in the shameful manner you have done, it would probably have convinced every discerning and unprejudiced man, that you had injuriously represented my design. No person, surely, that understands himself, will say, that the appointing a mediator to atone for sin, and forgiving us thro' him, proceeded from any want of goodness or mercy in God. Nor can any thing be said more honorary to the atonement, than that God provided it, 'because he was infinitely *wise* as well as merciful; taking such a method,' &c. But all this latter part of that long sentence you dishonestly leave out, making a period at the word *any*; and go on to comment upon the former part thus: "q. d. There was no absolute necessity of this sacrifice intervening; God might have forgiven sin without any; but *of the two*, he chose rather to do it with than without any." You quote and point that part of the sentence just in the same manner, I think, ten or a dozen times in your libel; and often give the like comment upon it: As if I intended, that God might, consistently with the supposition of his infinite wisdom, and his moral perfections, (all summarily comprehended in goodness) have forgiven the sins of men, in a method not wise and good, or at least not so wise and good as that which he actually chose. You pretend to give my sense thus,---'of the two he chose *rather* to do it with than without any': Which evidently amounts to this, that *of the two*, God chose to act as became an infinitely wise and perfect being, *rather* than to act as did not become such an One! My expression does not any more suppose that God might, consistently with his perfections, have forgiven the sins of men without the atonement of Christ, than it does, that he might in any, or all other respects in general, have acted a part different from that which is the wisest and best. And do you find neither *nature* nor *grace* inclining you to blush, Mr. Cleaveland, when you see your perverseness and dishonesty thus exposed to the world! If either of them, I am perswaded it is the *former*, corrupt as it is; for a reason which I leave to be conjectured---You go on thus, p. 11. 'But why did



did God chuse to do it with a sacrifice, rather than without any? What impudence is this! Did I not plainly inform you *why*, both negatively and positively, in that part of the same sentence, which you so felloneously left out?—viz. ‘not because he was *deficient in goodness*, or *not perfectly merciful*; but because he was infinitely *wise* as well as merciful; taking such a method herein, as is in its nature admirably adapted to *magnify the law, and make it honourable*.’ Is not this a sufficient reason,—that this method was infinitely wise, and admirably adapted to answer the most important ends in the divine government? What would the man have? It might perhaps have pleased you, who, it seems, have so little regard either for wisdom or goodness, or even common honesty, (in writing) if I had said that the atonement had not its foundation in, or rise from, infinite wisdom and goodness. For it seems, that to say it had, is, in your depraved opinion, to cast *injurious aspersions* upon it: In which, it is to be hoped, that no wise and good man will agree with you.

BUT it seems you would farther infer my *design* to shew the non-necessity of Christ’s atonement, from my words quoted by you in the last-mentioned page. Speaking of that passage, Heb. II. 9, 10.—*It BECAME him, &c.* I said, ‘It became his wisdom, it became his goodness—There was a fitness and congruity in it, as the wisest and best method of saving sinful men, without any kind of reference to that common, but yet strange supposition, of divine justice *being intirely distinct* from divine goodness.’—Therefore, to be sure, I supposed there was no moral necessity of atonement, with reference to divine justice in *any sense*! This is evidently what you design to make your readers believe, p. 11. after citing the passage aforesaid.

Now the dishonesty of this appears divers ways: According to my idea of God’s goodness, it is ‘always to be considered as inseparably connected with his *wisdom*; and regulated thereby in *all* its operations. It is not to be considered as a sort of blind instinct, or good-nature, detached from reason and right, or a regard to fitness and *propriety*.’ (Serm. p. 14.) And being thus considered, I supposed

supposed that it comprized the whole moral character of God, even his *justice*. These things you knew; for you have quoted many passages to this purpose, only to pervert them; as may appear hereafter. You therefore doubtless knew, that when I said, it became the wisdom and goodness of God to forgive the sins of men, thro' the sacrifice of Christ, I did not speak of his goodness in the common restrained sense, but as including his justice; in a sense analogous to that, in which the goodness of a wise prince or parent includes justice. So that if the atonement of Christ had any reference to goodness in this sense, it must necessarily have some, indeed a particular reference to justice. And this evidently appears to have been my meaning, because I expressly speak of it, in the same passage, as a method 'admirably adapted to magnify the law, and make it honorable,' &c. which could not be said with any propriety, if the atonement had no reference to justice and law. What then became of your honesty or your senses, Mr. *Cleaveland*, when you wrote as you did? Besides; this very passage, which you have used so villainously, is introduced in a manner, which plainly supposes I allowed a sort of moral necessity of atonement, in order to the forgiveness of mens sins. For it is an answer to this objection, which, I thought, some might possibly make against the doctrine delivered by me——'What *occasion* was there for any atonement, upon these principles?—Whereas the *scriptures constantly suppose the need of it in order to the pardon of sin.*' Now, that the scriptures really suppose a need, or necessity of it in order to our forgiveness, I plainly allowed: And accordingly went on to shew, whence that need or necessity arose, upon my own principles; viz. that the law of God might be *magnified* and made *honourable*; that a *just sense of his authority, the dignity of his laws and government, might be begotten and preserved in the minds of reasonable creatures; which is evidently best even for themselves.* And yet you have such a front, Mr. *Cleaveland*, as to represent me to the world as having *injuriously aspersed* the atonement of Christ as *unnecessary*.

BUT



BUT it is the word *rather*, as used by me with reference to this point, that seems chiefly to provoke your spleen, and put you upon fibbing and raging in such an ungodly manner as you do. Tho' I used this harmless word but once, I think, you fall foul of it in ten or a dozen places: In all of them giving a specimen of your *sense* and *honesty*. For example, p. 43. you quote, paraphrase and remark on my words thus, *verbatim*, in order to prove me guilty of an inconsistency——' He was just saying, "That we are "affured in the holy scriptures, that God forgives the sins "of men thro' this great sacrifice intervening, *RATHER* "than without *any*." q. d. "He might have done it with- "out *any*, there was no absolute necessity of his doing it "in this way, or not all." † 'And yet immediately adds, "There was a necessity of God's doing it in this way; "otherwise he could not maintain his own authority, "nor the dignity of his laws and government." This were doubtless a very palpable contradiction; such an one as few besides yourself could be guilty of. But, Mr. *Cleaveland*, do you not know the old proverb concerning persons of a certain very *infamous character*?—that it behoves them to have a *good memory*. In the first place, I neither *immediately*, nor at all added the words which you say I did; they are none of mine, tho' you have formally quoted them as such, in order to fix an inconsistency on me. In the next place, tho' I had actually expressed myself in that manner, I should not have been guilty of the least inconsistency. For I never denied a moral necessity of Christ's atonement, in order to God's maintaining the dignity of his laws and government, while he forgives the sins of men; tho' you have the front to insinuate that I did. Thirdly, your allowing, as you here do, that I assert there was a necessity of God's forgiving the sins of men thro' Christ's atonement, if he did it at all; since "otherwise he could not maintain his "own authority," &c. Your allowing this, I say, intirely overthrows the grand indictment brought against me, in order to support which you have told so many falsehoods;

C

† I suppose this was intended for, not *at all*; but I follow my copy.

hoods; viz. that of having *injuriously aspersed the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice and atonement*, as not being *absolutely necessary*, &c. Unhappy man! I beg that, at least for your own credit, you would rub up your *memory*, before you publish any more slander to the world.

BUT I must take a little farther notice of your cruel persecution of the innocent word *rather*, against which you rave thro' so great a part of your libel. In p. 77. (a passage which will be further noticed hereafter, with another view) you introduce me saying expressly, 'God might have forgiven the sins of men without any sacrifice intervening; indeed it was *rather* the best and wisest method to forgive the sins of men, thro' this great sacrifice of Christ intervening, than without any. The eternal rule of right, and the honor and dignity of God's moral law and government, are of *so small weight*, that they did but *just turn the scale* in favor of an atonement'---These, you know, you quote as my words; but I will indulge you so far at present, as to consider them only as your paraphrase upon my words, tho' it is beyond dispute, you intended your readers should think them mine. Now the manner of your commenting upon the word *rather*, as used by me, (supposing this to be designed only as a comment) brings to my mind many passages of scripture, in which the same word occurs: And I have been thinking what a notable expositor, casuist and divine you would appear, if you was to preach or print upon them, observing the same rule and method of interpretation, that you have in expounding my words. It must be hugely edifying to the good people of *Ipswich*---For example, the Psalmist says, 'I had RATHER be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness.' This you might descant upon thus---  
'There was no absolute, indispensable moral reason or ground, why holy David should prefer the house of God to the tents of wickedness: But *of the two*, he *rather* preferred the former to the latter. He might have *well and wisely* chosen the tents of wickedness: *The eternal rule of right*, the honor of the divine authority and laws, were *of so small weight*, that they did but *just turn the scale* in  
'favor



favor of the holy tabernacle. Mark, O ye dear children of -----, ye precious souls! mark well what a flight, superficial regard this *eminent saint* had to the house of ----- the place where his honor dwells; and how little aversion he had to wickedness, and the habitations thereof. O ye dear souls! what glorious encouragement does this give, to think yourselves in a converted, safe estate, even tho' you should not love the one, or hate the other quite so much as holy David did, little as that was! Again, it is said, 'Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but RATHER fear him that is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.' The pious Mr. *Cleaveland* upon the place, in conformity to his own method of interpretation: 'q. d. It is of very little consequence which of these you fear: indeed it is of the two *rather* the wisest and best to fear the latter; but there is no absolute, indispensable obligation to do so; the eternal rule of right, the dignity of ---'s moral law and government are *of so small weight, that they do but just turn the scale*: and whether only your bodies are killed now, or both your souls and bodies are destroyed hereafter, is hardly of any consequence'---It is easy to imagine what *practical* and *comforting uses* you might extract for yourself, and dear christian brethren, from this text so interpreted. Again: It is said, 'Seek not what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be cloathed: But RATHER seek the kingdom of God'---The learned and pious Mr. *Cleaveland* in Locum, 'q. d. The kingdom of heaven, righteousness, and life eternal, are indeed of the two *rather* preferable to good eating, drinking and fine cloaths; this must be allowed: But yet, precious souls! the difference is so inconsiderable, that it is not much matter which ye seek: the eternal rule of right,' &c. are *of so small weight, that,* &c. The excellent practical instructions and consolations resulting naturally from such an exposition of the place, I need not mention.—Once more: It is said, 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; but RATHER reprove them.' The warm and zealous, the clarified and greatly illuminated

Mr. *Cleaveland* upon the place—'q.d. There is no absolute necessity, dear souls! of your abstaining from the works of *darkness* and *dishonesty*, or of discountenancing them in others; you may be justified and saved without this. But yet of the two, it is rather more becoming you to reprove, than to practise and encourage such works. This is all that can be said. The eternal rule of right, the honor of --- the dignity of his laws and government, and the credit of christianity in the world, are of *so small weight*, that they do but *just turn the scale*;' &c. What excellent, useful and most comfortable reflexions might the apostle's words afford to *some people*, being thus paraphrased?

I HAVE here taken the liberty, Mr. *Cleaveland*, to comment for you, in your own way: giving the word *rather*, in these passages, precisely the same signification and force, that you have given it in my sermon: Upon which interpretation of it, the grand argument of your libel turns. I might altogether with as much truth and justice say, that I have delivered your natural, genuine sense of these several texts, as you can, that you have given mine, in your paraphrase. Indeed I might add, that by what I have heard of your wild, senseless and extravagant way of preaching in times past, I can scarce doubt but that you have often expounded scripture as ridiculously, as licentiously and profanely as you would have done, had you actually paraphrased those several passages, in the manner before expressed. And if you continue in the same way, tho' you stile yourself V. D. M. *a minister of God's word*; it should have rather been V. D. C. *a corrupter of his word*. Let me add that, by the many gross falsehoods, and wicked slanders in your libel, some of which have been already shewn, (and more are behind) it may be feared, tho' I do not affirm, that you are near as great a *corrupter* thereof in practice, as you are in principle or doctrine.

It is needless for me to spend time to brush away the other flimsy, cobweb-reasonings in the second part of your libel; and indeed it was my determination from the first, not to enter into a dispute with such a wrong-headed and worse-hearted wretch, any farther than was requisite to lay open the



the villainy of this attack upon me. That you have wilfully misrepresented my design, misquoted my words in some places, and put a most perverse construction upon them in others, is, I believe, very apparent to every impartial and intelligent person, who has ever compared your libel with my sermons. And if any thing, coming from *you*, could astonish me, (except sober truth, solid reasoning and candor) after what I have already observed in your libel, I should be astonished at the effrontery which you discover at the close of your said second head, p. 15. 'If I have not *hit* upon the Dr's *evident design*, I confess it is because I *can't comprehend him*'---What do you mean, pray! by not *bitting* upon, or not comprehending an *evident design*? If the design is *evident*, who but an idiot could help *bitting* upon, *comprehending*, or at least in general knowing what it is? That *you* could not comprehend my *whole* design, may be true; but that you understood more of it, than you was willing to own, and knowingly misrepresented it, is apparent; particularly from your misquoting, curtailing, mangling and mispointing my words, and by your perverse commenting on the word *rather*: Whereas had you acted honestly, it would have at once appeared to your readers, that you was only exposing yourself, by objecting against my sermons, in the manner you have done. No one can help *bitting* upon *your design*, in this way of proceeding; and seeing it to be villainous in an high degree. And pray! how much better a *design* had you, in what you say in the margin of p. 14. about my being 'full in the scheme (at least as to the fundamental and leading principles of it) which the Rev. President Clap, of Yale College, collected out of several authors, viz. Chubb,' &c. &c. &c.? I will tell you what some suppose to be at least partly your *design*, in introducing that pamphlet, and thus charging me with being in the scheme therein represented: viz. recommending yourself to the author, and the other governors of said College; which, it is said, *sponsored* you out some years ago; (tho' not as a *Laodicean*, 'neither cold nor hot'—) and so obtaining, by this dishonest means, those academical honors, of which you are at once so unworthy

thy and so ambitious : For had not this been the case, you would not, surely, so long have sought them in vain——

THE third head of your libel, from p. 15. to 47. is ‘to give a *concise* representation of the doctrine of the divine attributes, together with some of the natural inferences, as held by protestant reformers.’ This tedious medly of inconsistencies and absurdities, which you call a *concise representation*, &c. I take to be the marrow and quintessence of several of your old sermons, revised and transcribed upon this occasion. You appear in most parts of it to talk without any clear ideas ; making as free with your Creator, almost, as if you was his equal, or comprehended his nature as perfectly as he does himself. I consider this as your system of divinity ; and a greater piece of confusion and impertinence I hardly ever saw. It is partly such precious, sublime jargon as the wild, rambling exhorters used to entertain the gaping rabble with, several years ago, when you was one of them. Only by being printed, it appears rather more ridiculous, than if it were foamed out *extempore*. I shall not mispend time by particularly exposing it. I do not indeed deny, but that there are several important, well-known truths scattered here and there ; as particularly when you say, and endeavour to prove, p. 21. that God *cannot lie*. And yet, I think, you have much more clearly demonstrated in many places, *who can*, even without designing to make it appear. Whether you have, or have not done this, even in the next page, I leave you and others to consider. Speaking there of me, you say, ‘We may with greater propriety charge him with a *robbing of God*, of what he esteems his glory ‘——in *excluding the attribute of divine justice*.’ Now, Mr. Cleaveland, what do you think of such a representation as this ? Did I not often speak of justice, even punitive justice, as a part of God’s moral character ?—as a branch of his essential goodness, considered in connection with infinite wisdom, a regard to right, fitness and propriety, &c ? Why then would you slander me thus, as if I *excluded* divine justice ; especially when I sometimes speak of it, in conformity to the common method, as a particular distinct attribute



bute of God? If you go on in this way, Mr. *Cleaveland*, without repentance, I verily believe you will have reason to wish in earnest, that God was not a *just* Being, either in your own sense or mine---You have interlarded your afore-said system of divinity, with other gross misrepresentations of me, and many rude aspersions, by way of seasoning; that it might go down the better. But I leave you to enjoy the credit of these; not thinking them worthy of any particular notice.

I PASS on to the 4th and last general head of your libel, which you express thus, p. 47. 'To take notice of some of the Dr's inaccuracies and inconsistencies.' I cannot but observe here, that your whole libel contains but 108 pages, 61 of which belong to this last head; in which you was to play the *critic* upon my inaccuracies, and shew your own wit and sagacity. Mr. *Cleaveland*, I never pretended to much accuracy in writing; but, methinks, it is a little merry, that you, of all men, should undertake to shew my inaccuracies. When or where did you learn this curious art of criticising?—in what *college*? in what *university*?—during the little time that you was *permitted* to continue at Yale-college?—Was you a *freshman* or *sophomore*, or of what standing was you, when you *left* that seat of the muses? Tho' this was so early, yet what an *Aristarchus* are you! But it must be observed, that *nature* had done a great deal for you, without *art*. For, I think, it will be apparent to any one, that your criticisms actually proceeded from *nature*; I mean *human nature* as it is commonly represented—*wholly evil and corrupt*—To be serious; had you not exposed yourself enough before, in quality of a theologian, and champion for the protestant faith in opposition to the *injurious aspersions* cast upon it by me, without pretending to set up for a critic too! Should you not at least have learnt the difference between rustic impudence and wit, between lying and criticising, before you attempted to shew your talents in this way? Whether you did, or did not know these material differences, may appear to all who shall think it worth while to compare your pretended criticisms, with my sermons. I am  
far

far from designing a *defence* of them against you. I only mean to shame you, if possible, for your vanity and wickedness, by taking a cursory notice of some of your criticisms. This being my chief aim, I shall scarce meddle with any of them, in which folly and ignorance bear the greater part; but almost intirely confine myself to those of them, in which impudence and falsehood are the most conspicuous. Some indeed may be briefly mentioned, in which it will not be easy to determine, whether the former or the latter are most prevalent.

As to what you object concerning my using the terms *attribute* or *property* and *quality*, as synonymous; I shall only ask you, What would be the material and precise difference between one person's saying of Mr. Cleaveland of Ipswich, that the *attribute* or *property* of self-conceit is very conspicuous in him, and another's saying that the *quality* of self-conceit is so? Which of these would be the greatest compliment, or the most *accurate* way of speaking? In p. 48. you speak of me as having represented God as "a compound being, made up of as many distinct self-existent qualities or parts, as he has divine attributes." Now what foundation had you for this, besides a passage in which I expressly spake of the *impropriety* of ascribing *parts* to God? Speaking of goodness as an 'essential attribute' of God; I add, that it is 'no borrowed or precarious excellency, as the goodness of men and angels is in them, but as necessary as his being. Indeed, one need not scruple to call it a *part* of God himself, only as there may be an *impropriety in that manner of expression concerning the infinite God, in ALL other respects in general*'—Serm. p. 12. Now, after this, what greater dishonesty or villainy could any Critic be guilty of, than you are, in making such a bustle as you do, for almost two pages together, about *parts of God*? And you have the insolence to say, p. 49.—"see what an accurate and consistent description *the Dr.* gives of the One only living and true God. q. d. "God is a compound being, made up of eternal, essential, and equally necessary, self-existent parts: And tho' these parts, &c." Now, could you have given your readers such a representation



representation of my doctrine, if you had understood the material distinction which I before mentioned to you; that between *lying* and *criticising*? If you take these for *synonymous terms*, I do not wonder that you think yourself a very masterly *critic*. — Thus you father your own nonsense and impiety upon me; contrary to my express, declared opinion.

The next of your criticisms which I shall take notice of, is this, That I sometimes speak of justice as a particular moral attribute of God, distinct from goodness; and at other times speak of it as one branch of his essential goodness. Your cavils about this, make so great a part of your libel, that there is no occasion to refer to any particular place. I explained myself so far, respecting this matter, that no intelligent, candid person could mistake my meaning. For it is evident that when I spake of justice in God, as distinct from goodness or benevolence in the common restrained sense; I considered it as no otherwise distinct therefrom in him, than it is in a wise and good man, whether a parent or a prince. It is common to speak of justice in man, as a moral virtue distinct from charity or love, which is frequently spoken of as another moral virtue. And yet it is certain that love or charity, considered in the largest, or most comprehensive sense of it, includes, not only justice, but all other moral and social virtues. The apostle Paul often speaks of charity in this comprehensive sense; but most expressly, Rom. XIII. 8, 9. A passage, of which if you had had any tolerable understanding, you could surely never have cavilled in the manner you have done— ‘Owe no  
 ‘ man any thing, *says he*, but to love one another. For  
 ‘ he that *loveth* another, hath *fulfilled the law*. For this,  
 ‘ Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal,  
 ‘ Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet;  
 ‘ and if there be any *other commandment*, it is briefly  
 ‘ *comprehended* in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love  
 ‘ thy Neighbour as thyself.’ Pray, *learned Sir*, is not  
 doing justice often spoken of as a particular moral virtue

in scripture, as if it were in some sort distinct from *loving mercy*, or from *charity*; and *vice versa*? And yet does not the apostle here speak of that commandment, *loving our neighbours as our selves*, as summarily comprehending all the commandments of the second table? and consequently justice? And are not christian magistrates and parents bound, by that *comprehensive command* which the apostle speaks of, when understood in its proper extent, even to *punish* their subjects and children respectively, for the good of those that do evil, or for the warning and benefit of others? But your narrow, dark and groveling mind can perhaps have no conception of punishment proceeding from love, or from any thing besides a spirit of revenge. Not that I by any means exclude the *hatred* of sin or vice, as if it had not, or ought not to have any place in him that punishes it; whether it be God or man—All the nugatory, flimzy ratiocinations and criticisms which you have adduced, respecting my sometimes speaking of justice as if it were a distinct moral attribute of God, and at other times of goodness as if it comprehended justice, and all divine moral attributes, would hold equally good against the apostle Paul's account of charity, and its various branches. When once you have enough of wisdom, and of the spirit of christianity, to conceive how *love* is the fulfilling of the law; or how all moral, social virtues are summarily comprehended and enjoined in this saying, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self*; you will no longer be at any loss to understand what I mean, when I speak of divine justice and divine goodness in the manner I do; nor be so captious as to object against it as an inaccuracy or inconsistency. Whether your criticisms upon this head chiefly proceed from ignorance, or from malice and vanity, I will not pretend to determine: But, that there is a great deal of both discovered therein, is undeniable. And you may if you please, in the next place try your critical skill upon the apostle Paul; and endeavour to shew that he did not understand himself, but wrote inaccurately and *inconsistently*—But I forgot



forgot myself in what I have said in this paragraph ; by descending to reason with a man, whom I was only to reprove and chastize as a captious, conceited wrangler, &c.

That you deserve no better a character than this, is farther evident from what you offer page 50, 51. in order to shew me guilty of an inconsistency, because, tho' I spoke of the goodness of God as infinite, " without measure, without bounds ;" yet I afterwards spoke of it as *directed, controuled and regulated* by infinite wisdom in all its operations ; in opposition to its being " a sort of ' blind instinct, or good-nature, detached from reason ' and right, or a regard to fitness and propriety." With reference to which you say, " What is controuled and ' regulated, I thought was *bounded and limited* !" A great deal of the like *critical* stuff is in the pages aforesaid. So that, in your sage opinion, if the divine goodness is directed, controuled and limited by infinite wisdom in its operations ; and always to be considered in connexion therewith, in opposition to its being a mere *blind instinct*, it must be *bounded and limited*, and therefore *finite*. And if you here mean any thing, in opposition to me, it must be this, that God cannot at once be infinite both in wisdom and goodness ; for if infinite wisdom regulates goodness, the latter, say you, must be " bounded and limited !" The same way of reasoning, or rather of impious trifling, might be applied to the *power* of God. I suppose all are agreed in general, that the power of God is exercised according to, or regulated by his infinite wisdom ; not exerted at random. If so, according to you, great Critic ! God's power cannot be infinite, " without measure, ' without bounds :" because you *always thought*, that what is directed, controuled and regulated, even tho' it be only by *infinite* wisdom, " is bounded & limited," and therefore finite—What but the most stupid ignorance, or the blindest rage and malice, could lead you to *critize* in this manner ? So desirous are you to prove me guilty of *inaccuracies and inconsistencies*, that you will run yourself into atheism, or what is next akin to it, by denying, in

effect, that God can be both infinitely wise and infinitely good!

With the same *pious* intention doubtless it is, that you misquote my words, p. 57. "That the truly great, noble and excellent end which a good God has in view," &c. These are none of my words, tho' you quote and comma them as if they were. You also misquote me p. 58. where speaking of me, you say,—'He argues thus 'to prove punitive justice to be a branch of goodness, viz. "God's end must be either positively good, or positively bad; if it be the creatures happiness, it is positively good; if it be the creatures misery, it is positively bad and cruel," &c. &c. —Now tho' you mark these words as a quotation from me; I assert that they are none of mine. And in that passage in my sermon, which comes the nearest to them, (not very near) p 30. I was not speaking concerning punitive justice, as a branch of goodness; but of the almost infinite *variety* of God's works, or of the universe; and the end thereof—Why will you fib so, Mr. Cleaveland? You discover your dishonesty again, p. 60. where you say, 'Let us see how the Dr. *reconciles* ' God's leaving the heathen world to unavoidable and eternal misery, with his being actually kind and merciful to all.' You then pretend to give my solution of this difficulty; adding with an unmannerly sneer—'A satisfactory answer this!—'—'This is enough to satisfy ' some I trow!—But, you know, I did not allow the truth of the said supposition about the heathen world; nor pretend to shew its consistency with God's goodness to all. It was therefore knavish in you to give such a representation of the matter, saying, 'Let us see how the ' Dr *reconciles*, &c.'—But it seems almost as easy for the *Æthiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots*, as for you that have been so *accustomed* to misrepresentation and fibbing, to write, and represent things fairly. You are at your dirty work again, in several pages following; and particularly page 67. where you say, 'In p. 45 the ' Dr. presumes to tell, how God BECAME *infinitely*, per-

' *fectly*



'*settly good, &c.*' This is another infamously false representation. What I endeavoured to shew in the passage to which you refer, is not how God *became* infinitely wise or good ; but, as it is there expressed, that ' God ' being supposed all-knowing, independent and almighty, the absolute perfection of his goodness *may be deduced* from hence, &c.' i. e. clearly *argued* or *inferred*. And I expressly guarded against the impious supposition, that God is not *eternally* and *necessarily* good. Now are you, or are you not an impudent slanderer, for publishing to the world, that I *presume to tell how God BECAME infinitely good, &c.* only because I shewed an eternal, necessary *connexion* between omniscience, independency, omnipotence and *goodness*? Is this criticizing or lying, Mr. Cleaveland? For once, let conscience speak.

But I now proceed to take notice of a wonderful *criticism* indeed : I mean one of the most impudent, barefac'd and execrable pieces of *forgery* that, I believe, any man ever committed, without being pillor'd or cropp'd, or suffering some other infamous punishment; unless where proof of the fact was wanting, as it is not in the present case. You have pretended to cite from me, in the most formal manner, a long passage, part of three pages in your libel, not a single compleat sentence of which is mine. You have, indeed, taken two or three scraps of sentences from my sermons, here and there, at many pages distance ; fill'd them up with your own nonsense and impiety ; put all in such an order as best suited your *critical* design, and palmed the whole upon the world as mine, without the least distinction ; I mean as my very words : And all this, in order to shew my *inaccuracies* and *inconsistencies* ! For your utter confusion, I shall now set this piece of wickedness in folio before your eyes, and the eyes of the world. Page 76 and onwards, you say thus, *verbatim*—

' But I must not pass from this without taking some notice of the Dr's consistency, or rather inconsistency : ' SAYS HE, " A good God from his punitive justice, which

" is

“ is a branch of his goodness, may be obliged to punish  
 “ transgressors, for the support of order, right, &c. or  
 “ of the honour of God’s violated commandments, and  
 “ the dignity of his moral government—Christ suffered  
 “ from punitive justice, and was numbered with trans-  
 “ gressors (tho’ he was without sin, a lamb without blemish  
 “ and without spot, for he suffered the just for the un-  
 “ just) when he made atonement by his blood, and there-  
 “ by supported the honor of God’s violated command-  
 “ ments, and the dignity of his government, in such  
 “ sort that guilty sinners might be pardoned consistently  
 “ with the eternal rule of right; but tho’ God may from  
 “ punitive justice be obliged to punish sinners for the  
 “ support of order, right, &c. and when he punished  
 “ Christ, the just for the unjust, it was to support the  
 “ honor of his violated laws, and the dignity of his go-  
 “ vernment, and that guilty sinners might be pardoned  
 “ consistently with the eternal rule of right: Yet Christ’s  
 “ sufferings were without any kind of reference to divine  
 “ justice to satisfy that, for this is absolutely irreconcilable  
 “ with Christ’s dying the just for the unjust, as conse-  
 “ quential to, and the effect of, God’s love, mercy and  
 “ grace,—And tho’ punitive justice in God, regarding  
 “ the eternal rule of right, and the support of the honor  
 “ and dignity of God’s laws and moral government, in  
 “ order that we guilty sinners might be pardon’d con-  
 “ sistently therewith; obliged God to lay on Christ the  
 “ iniquities of us all, and to bruise the son of his love in  
 “ our stead: Yet there was no absolute necessity of  
 “ Christ’s atonement in reference to justice being satisfied  
 “ thereby, such idea of divine justice must be wholly  
 “ and forever excluded; God might have forgiven the  
 “ sins of men without any sacrifice intervening; indeed,  
 “ it was *rather* the best and wisest method to forgive the  
 “ sins of men, thro’ the great sacrifice of Christ’s interven-  
 “ ing, than without any. The eternal rule of right,  
 “ and the honor and dignity of God’s moral law and  
 “ government are of so small weight, that they did but  
 “ just



“ just turn the scale in favour of an atonement to be  
 “ made for sin, by the sacrifice of Christ: And tho’ the  
 “ result was, that Christ was to make an atonement by  
 “ suffering the penalty of the law at the hands of puni-  
 “ tive justice, yet this must be without any kind of  
 “ reference to divine justice, to satisfy that. ” —  
 ‘ O Doctor can! God the Judge of all the earth, require  
 ‘ an atonement to be made, if he is not offended? And  
 ‘ can he be offended, and yet not justly offended? ’ —

O Mr. *Cleaveland*! can you read these last words of  
 your own, without trembling? Do not your knees smite  
 one against the other, when you reflect on your own  
 falsehood and villainy, particularly in the pretended long  
 citation from me, immediately foregoing? All that long  
 passage, which I have here marked with double commas,  
 is so marked, and stands exactly thus in your libel. It is  
 also introduced by you in the most formal manner, as a  
 quotation from me, with these words preceding, ‘ SAYS  
 HE ’ — Nor is there the least room to doubt, but that  
 you intended your readers, who were unacquainted with  
 me and my sermons, should believe you had extracted  
 this passage from them, word for word. Must they not  
 necessarily have supposed so, if they had been so credu-  
 lous as to think you a man of any truth, honor or con-  
 science? And yet you know in your own conscience, if  
 you have any, that this is a piece of right down forgery;  
 that not one intire sentence of all this gallimaufry or hotch  
 potch, is mine. Is not the worst sort of lying and slan-  
 dering, that of writing, and publishing to the world  
 known falsehoods, injurious to the reputation of another?  
 It is well, Mr. *Cleaveland*, if you have not, sooner or later,  
 great reason to wish, that you had never learnt even to  
*write*; in which case your guilt might probably have been  
 less than it is. For you could not possibly have used me  
 in so injurious a manner with your tongue, tho’ *set on*  
*fire of hell*, and *walking thro’ the earth*, as you have  
 done by writing and publishing this libel; which may be  
 dispersed farther abroad than you might have been per-  
 mitted

mitted to ramble in person, without being taken up, and receiving your due deserts. I find, on this occasion, a great strife in my breast between indignation against, and pity for, a person so lost to all sense of honor, virtue and religion, as to be capable of such a piece of wickedness as this—Is it not as easy to prove one man as another guilty of inconsistencies, in your way? — a *Newton, Locke, Clarke or Butler*, as a *Cleaveland*! —

—Another instance of gross prevarication, and even profaneness in you, I find p. 79, so soon after this. After quoting something which I had said concerning the goodness of God to his creatures in general, in punishing wicked men hereafter, by way of example and terror; you wickedly wrest my words, as if I had said, that he would therein be good and merciful even to those whom he will *destroy, soul and body in hell*. For thus you express yourself—‘I have no apprehension that *tender mercy* itself will manifest and exercise itself *towards the wicked* in their terrible punishment in the other world—How *tender mercy to the miserable* is manifested, in making the miserable *as miserable as they can be*, by executing punishment upon them for their sins — is beyond my apprehension!—I believe, if the Dr. was to suffer the punishment of hell, he would have no discovery at all of the tender mercy of God *towards him* in such a terrible punishment. I pray God that neither of us may ever know what that punishment is, by experiencing the same in the other world.’ P. 79, 80. Mr. *Cleaveland*, you know in your own soul, that you here pervert my words and meaning. And are you not ashamed and afraid to trifle thus upon so tremendous a subject, in order to prove me guilty of an *inaccuracy*, or *inconsistency*? Do you really believe there is any hell for wicked men?—particularly a *lake burning with fire and brimstone*, in which *all liars are to have their part*? If you do, it appears to me that you are chargeable with the worst and most unaccountable kind of *inconsistency*, in mis-representing and falsifying my sermons, in the manner you have done; and particularly as to this point —

But



But still you go on to fib egregiously for many pages together, in order to shew me inconsistent with myself. I shall only glance at a few particulars more. You give a sad example of *the sin that does so easily beset you*, p. 87. with reference to what I said concerning an unwarrantable expression of Mr. Calvin, in his commentary on my text. You there say, 'The Dr. places in the margin of p. 83 and 84. a passage of the learned Mr. Calvin, concerning the reprobate, and says, "That a *certain* decree of reprobation was the known opinion of that learned man". These words are there marked by you with double commas, as if they were mine, tho' they are not. Upon which you immediately go on thus, 'And adds, "A sentiment at once unsupported by reason or scripture; nay "contrary to both," &c. These words are mine; but you here misrepresent me, as denying any '*certain* decree of reprobation'. This will appear to any one who consults the passage, to which you refer. After quoting Mr. Calvin's words, I observed that they naturally import, 'That there are many persons who, by a supposed eternal decree of reprobation, are *absolutely precluded from the benefit of pardon, or the grace of God revealed to the world.* ' This was the known opinion of that learned man: A sentiment, at once unsupported by reason or scripture', &c. Now why could you not quote truly and fairly, Mr. Cleaveland? Can you give any other reason for it, than that it is more agreeable to your depraved mind to fib, cavil and misrepresent, than to speak truth? You go on to exercise your talent, and to shew *whose child* you are, in the same page; where you say,— 'The Dr. *states* the doctrine' (i. e. as you evidently mean, the *Calvinistic* doctrine of reprobation) 'in an objection; but discovers himself disingenuous and abusive in the manner of his *stating* it; and then vents his indignation against the doctrine', &c. Now it is false, that I *stated* either the scripture—or the *Calvinistic* doctrine of reprobation, in the place to which you refer, Sermon. p. 66. May not one speak of the absurd, impious notions which some persons have of reprobation, but you must presently take it to your self, or say this was aimed against the *Calvinists*? even tho'

tho' you deny they hold it in the manner expressed ! Besides ; I did not say, that *any* actually held the impious doctrine, which I there spake of ; tho', I believe, I might have truly done so. I spake with great caution, because I would not needlessly give offence to any : Saying.— ' If ' any persons *really* hold such a doctrine', &c. And even you, Mr. *Cleaveland*, with all your uncommon stock of assurance, will not dare openly to assert the doctrine of reprobation, in the sense there denied by me. Are you not then an insolent caviller, to talk at the rate you do here ? —I hope there are but few persons in the world, who have such strong and sad *marks* of reprobation upon them, as a certain man whom I could name to you ; but one, to whom you are a great *stranger*, tho' it nearly concerns you to have an intimate *acquaintance* with him. —

You go on misrepresenting and cavilling, till you come to p. 94. where you again misquote me. You there say, ' And as the Dr. says,' " God's knowledge (which formed " his plan")—This is none of my expression. So prone you are to *leasings*, when you pretend to cite, that you will some times do it, even without having any occasion for it : And what is this, but fibbing for fibbing's sake ? Will you never leave off this scurvy trick ? You are at it again in the next page. You there represent me as speaking of ' the doctrine of original sin', as *the grossest of all absurdities*, &c. Now you know, I said not this of the *doctrine of original sin*, but only of that unscriptural opinion, that infants,—' infants of a *span long*, are justly liable ' to eternal torments'—Do all that hold the doctrine of *original sin*, hold this opinion also ? If not, I could not be justly charged in general, with calling that doctrine *the grossest of all absurdities* : or as speaking of those that maintain it, as *persons of a sadly depraved judgment*. I am sorry if you have so little conscience, as to feel no remorse after such base and disingenuous conduct, to say the least of it. You trifle and prevaricate shamefully again, p. 97. by applying what I said so respectfully of those, who have in some respects different conceptions from my own, about justice as a branch of goodness, and the atonement of Christ, to those who hold that infants are  
justly



justly liable to eternal torments: This you do, in order to shew an inconsistency in me. You captiously and falsely represent what I say upon these different points, thus—  
 “He has a high veneration for many of Us, *as wise and excellent men, that are to be pitied as persons of a sadly depraved judgment.*”—Many of us!—to be sure, us, if wise and excellent men are spoken of! Many such I know, but who art thou, Mr. Cleaveland? Do you think this discovers your sagacity or your impudence?—Whatever others are, yet that you are a person, not only of a sadly depraved judgment, but heart also, is very manifest: And if you *excel* in any thing, it is in what all wise and good men of every denomination, greatly detest and abhor.

I must next rebuke you for your irreverence and profanity in speaking of the great God, p. 101. You there say, ‘Why may’nt the judgment of God—be a just and righteous judgment? The Dr. will not say, it was the effect of a *sadly depraved judgment* in the Almighty!’ I take no notice of the *nonsense* of this; (that being so common with you, and your libel so much below criticism): But you are very culpable for your impiety in speaking of the ALMIGHTY in this light, fleeing, flouting manner: Shewing a want of due reverence to him, as well as of all decorum and good manners in your treatment of me. Rudeness and insolence towards man, Mr. Cleaveland, tho’ inexcusable, are harmless in comparison of impiety to God. I fear you have forgotten, or never learnt the third commandment. I therefore advise you to think seriously of, and to remember it. Men of your stamp, are generally much too free with their Maker.

You are guilty of another falsehood, at least an implicit one, when speaking of original sin, you say, p. 101. ‘Hence the Dr. does not *state* the doctrine right, when he says, “without any offence of their own”’. You know I neither *stated*, nor attempted to *state* that doctrine; tho’ I mentioned what I take to be one great error relative thereto; *viz.* that infants, before actual sin, are justly liable to eternal torments. And you doubtless designed to impose upon your readers, by speaking of my *stating* the doctrine, &c.

Thus I have produced a specimen of your way of criticising. I have let pass innumerable scurrilous reflexions, as well as senseless remarks on my sermons; scarce taking notice of any thing in your libel, but what betrays the falsehood and wickedness of your heart. Mere nonsense and absurdity I can overlook in *you*; but for your dishonesty you ought to be rebuked, and that *before all*; because your sin, in this respect, is public; you have *proclaimed* it yourself. However, before I proceed to administer the more general correction which I intend for you, I must take notice of one very singular piece of insolence in your 104th page. After so much falsehood and forgery, abuse and calumny, you have the front to give me a caution, not to *throw dirt at you*.—‘If the Dr. shall think proper to make any reply’, &c.—it is justly expected, that he will not debase his noble powers, by *raking together, and throwing dirt*—What matchless impudence is this! Whether you speak of my ‘noble powers’, by way of irony, as I conclude from the whole tenor of your libel, or by way of compliment, is a matter of great indifference to me. I equally despise your clownish, unmannerly sneers and scoffs, and your panegyrics. Or rather, the compliments of so insignificant, false a person, as you appear to be by this libel, would be more nauseous and dishonourable to me than your foulest invectives; which are, in one respect, the highest encomiums that you can bestow. And yet, for your own sake, I am sorry you should discover so much insolence, and causeless virulence against me, (to crown all the rest) as to caution me against throwing *dirt* at you. You was doubtless conscious, that you deserved a severe chastisement. But know, unhappy, shameless man! that to administer proper reproof and correction to such an one as thou art, is not throwing dirt! And tho’ the chastizing a *Thersites* is not thought a matter of much glory; yet it has ever been accounted a useful service to the public at least, if not eventually to the brawling, wrangling wretch himself, who is the subject of the discipline.

Mr. Cleaveland, your guilt is really great, very great; and it’s proper you should be made sensible of it. What



is the ground of your public quarrel against me? Does it really amount to any thing more than this? I think divine justice is comprehended in divine goodness, in a way analogous to that in which justice, and all other social virtues are comprehended in the love of our neighbour: you think it is not. I think God forgives the sins of men, thro' the atonement of Christ, because this was wisest and best; what most became a God of infinite wisdom and goodness: you seem to think otherwise. I do not think God has decreed to damn men, but for their unrepented sins; neither dare you assert that he has, tho' you have reviled me with reference to this matter. I do not think it consistent with justice to make infants eternally miserable, solely on account of the first transgression: you think it is. This is the sum of the matter. And do you, can you suppose my sentiments in these respects, as expressed in my sermons, a sufficient foundation for representing me to the world as an enemy to some of the *most important* principles of the christian religion!—Or can it be a credit to any religion, to represent it as *mainly* founded on such principles as I denied! You reproach christianity by doing so, whatever you may imagine.

Besides; if I was erroneous in any of these respects; yet how unwarrantable a method have you taken? In your very first page, the civil epithets you give me, are, 'bold and dogmatical'—And are not palpable falsehoods, misquotations and forgeries, in order to give the world an ill opinion of the principles, and to hurt the reputation of any one, very heinous sins? You and I, Mr. Cleaveland, know very well who has done these things—Is not a good name rather to be chosen than great riches? If so, your endeavouring, by repeated falsehoods proved upon you, and the most vile arts, to represent me to the world as an impious fool and madman, is certainly a much more heinous sin, than to have stolen a great treasure from me, or taken it from me on the high-way. I really think the sin you have been guilty of, in writing and publishing this libel, far greater than either of these, or to have burnt my house, would have been. Nor have I reason to think, you would refrain from doing me any kind of mischief

in

in your power, unless more restrained by *something else*, than either by the fear of God, or a principle of justice—The injury would have been great, in my opinion, if you had palmed upon the world any thing of *your own* writing, as *mine*, even tho' you had done your *best*: What is it then, to palm upon it, as mine, what you wrote when you did your *worst*; crowding together as much folly, contradiction and impiety, as even you could get into so narrow a compass! This is what you have done, more especially in that long piece of forgery beginning p. 76 of your libel. Now suppose any should be so unacquainted with my principles, and so ignorant of you, as to think you fair and honest in your citations, and in the representations you have given of my sermons; as possibly some may be: What opinion must they have of me?—Such an one, do you imagine, as they would have from reading those sermons themselves?—How would you like, Mr. *Cleaveland*, to be treated in this manner yourself?—Make the case your own.—If your conscience is not seared as with an hot iron, you must feel great anguish therein: Or if that is past feeling, still your anxiety must be great, unless you are also lost to all sense of shame, and regard for your reputation.

You undoubtedly sinned against *light*. For you acknowledge p. 8. (perhaps inadvertently, but certainly unluckily for you) that '*lying and unfaithfulness are as really moral evils, as unkindness or unmercifulness.*'—How then could you misrepresent and falsify my sermons so notoriously; at once abusing me and the world, after such a concession as this! Is it because you think lightly of *moral evils*; or imagine the practice of them consistent with a *state of grace*? and that your *orthodoxy* will cover all?—But if such things are really *moral evils*, even you must own, it is *RATHER best of the two*, that men should abstain from them; even tho' you should suppose it *not absolutely necessary* in order to salvation. I do not pretend exactly to know your sentiments upon these points: But if the *eternal rule of right, and God's moral law and government are of so small weight, that they do but just turn the scale* in favour of truth and integrity, in opposition



position to *lying* and *unfaithfulness* ; yet since they actually turn it, I see not but that you must be self-condemned upon your own principles. And whereas you say, that these are as certainly moral evils, as *unkindness* or *unmercifulness* ; I must remind you, that if you are guilty of the former, you are certainly guilty of the latter also. For what could be more *unkind* or *unmerciful* in you, than to father your own nonsense and impiety upon me !—And this, not when you did your best, but worst ! How unmerciful, as well as false and perfidious was this, Mr. Cleaveland !

You are the more inexcusable for this outrageous assault upon me, because of the cautious manner in which I expressed myself as to divine justice and goodness, and the atonement ; (which are the chief ground of your quarrel.) Speaking of divine justice as included in goodness, and of my intention briefly to explain my-self on that point, I said, ‘ This I would do, at once with all reverence to God, and with all due respect to those who have different conceptions of the matter,’ Serm. p. 20. Again, p. 24. ‘ From whence, I think, (tho’ it doth not become a mortal man to speak confidently in such cases) that it follows, That there is not really in the great and glorious God, any such distinction betwixt goodness and justice, as has been objected against.’ Again, referring to the same point, and to what I had been briefly saying about atonement, it is subjoined—— ‘ Tho’ by the way, these things are not said by me, but with an high veneration for those many wise and excellent men, who either have, or seem to have, different conceptions of this matter.’ p. 65. Was not this peaceable, modest and candid ; tho’ you may call it ‘ bold and dogmatical’ ? Had I not a right to speak my sentiments upon these points ? If you disliked them, could you not content yourself with preaching your own ? Or if you must needs publish them ; would it not have been more decent and expedient for you to do it, without engaging in a personal controversy with me ? Would not any valuable end which you could propose to yourself, have been answered as well, tho’ you had never mentioned my name ? There was, as I am well informed, but one copy of my sermons in your parish ; and that in such hands, that there was no danger of its being lent about

to corrupt your parishioners—Or if you thought the care of all these churches was upon you ; and that it was incumbent on you, I say, upon you ! to stand up in defence of the most important principles of religion against me, (while ‘ our divines of indisputable ability’ were silent) should you not at least have paid a strict regard to truth, decency and moral honesty? —

Moreover : this furious attack appears to have proceeded from malice prepense : it was a deliberate piece of wickedness. Your libel, by the many references, quotations, misquotations, and studied perversions which it contains, shews a great deal of malicious pains in the author ; and, as confused and immethodical as the composition is, (I scarce ever saw one more so) I conjecture it must have employed a person of your abilities near half a year in the writing. And even after it was finished, it lay by several months, before you could get either man or angel to help this lame offspring of your brain into the pool, I mean the press ; there having been, as I am informed, but one subscriber for your libel in Boston. Here you had time for recollection : And this want of subscribers was an hint to you, tho’ you would not take it, to desist from your wicked purpose ; as it shew’d that you had not the public approbation. Besides : there were extracts from my sermons published in the same paper with your proposals ; plainly shewing the iniquity of your undertaking, as to the main point—But persist you would and did ; even tho’ you was forced to come under obligation yourself, to take off about half the whole impression, (for want of subscribers) before you could persuade the printer to undertake this dirty job. A charge which, I suppose, you was ill able to bear ; tho’ possibly your prudent intention was, to sell these copies to your parishioners at a moderate advance ; I know not—In the mean time, it is said, you took a journey of more than 200 miles, into Connecticut, in order to get a degree from that College, in which, for some nameless reasons, it was thought improper for you to stay the usual time ;—that you might gratify your vanity, and recommend your libel, by annexing A. M. to your name. But failing in this design, you was resolved to go on, and take your revenge,  
by



by adding *three* letters to your name (V. D. M.) instead of *two* ; which might answer the end as well, perhaps, with most of your readers. And indeed, I must own, there are some *Arts*, of which you have shewn yourself an undoubted *Master* in this performance, without a *degree* ; tho' such *Arts* as entitle a man much less to *academical* honors, in my opinion, than to something which I shall not mention—But not to digress farther ; all these things shew, how deliberate and resolute you have been in the perpetration of this piece of wickedness ; which is a great aggravation of it.

I may take the hint of another aggravation, from the three great *Capitals* aforesaid, annexed to your Name, with the following title, *Pastor of a church*—Such gross falsehoods, misrepresentations and forgeries as your libel contains, would have been highly criminal in any man ; But, in a pretended minister of Jesus Christ, in whose mouth there was no guile ;—in a man, who should not only preach truth and righteousness, but be an example thereof to others ;—in one who pretends to extraordinary zeal and sanctity ;—an uncommon concern for the purity of religion ;—in one who, in his first page, expressed his apprehension that my doctrine was ‘ not only subversive of the *orthodox faith*, but even of *morality*, or *true virtue* ;’—in such a man, I say, this conduct is so inconsistent, impudent and abominable, that words are wanting to express the foulness and infamy of it ! Bishop *Tillotson*, whom you doubtless think a grand heretic, speaks of some persons who have got a *scurvy trick of lying for the truth*. And if the truth of God will *the more abound thro' any man's lies*, I will not deny but that you, Mr. *Cleaveland*, may prove a very eminent instrument of promoting it—But can you think it proper to oppose those whom you think hereticks, by such wicked arts as you have used ? Is orthodoxy, supposing you to be in possession of it, to be defended and propagated by defamation, slander and forgery ? Have these methods any tendency to put supposed *Arminians* out of countenance ?

or are they any credit to the cause in which they are employed? Does it not shew the most consummate effrontery, impiety and hypocrisy, for any one who sets himself up as a zealous champion for the cause of God and his truth; and pretends a great concern for the salvation of precious, immortal souls, to be so regardless of *his own*, as to do such things under the cloak of religion, as a common heathen would blush at? Let me tell you plainly, Mr. *Cleaveland*, I had much rather my soul should be in a pagan's soul's stead (even a very immoral one's) than in your's, if you allow yourself in such wicked practices in other respects, as I have proved you guilty of in this, notwithstanding all your supposed orthodoxy, gospel-light, or any *other light*. It will doubtless be more intolerable in the day of judgment, for those who live and die *with a LIE in their right hand*, under the gospel-dispensation, than for wicked heathen. I hope this will not be the case with you. I do not despair of you: For I am told, one excuse you made to the printer for not coming seasonably to take off the copies of your libel, which you stood engaged for, was, that many people in your parish were under great spiritual awakenings; so that you was obliged to attend upon, advise and comfort them. It may therefore be hoped, that it will soon be *your own turn* to be awakened, convinced and brought to repentance. Conversing with persons under great concern of soul, and deep impressions of the evil and danger of sin, may, by the blessing of God, be one means of bringing you to a proper sense of your own sins, in so slandering and abusing me; and when you are a true penitent yourself, you will doubtless be better qualified to comfort and *strengthen your brethren*.—I do not condemn you as a wicked man on account of your *opinions*, though I think some of them very absurd; nor presume to judge your heart, in a way unauthorized by scripture, as many persons of your stamp used to do some years ago. No! In whatever I say of you, I observe the rule—'By their fruits ye shall know them.' You came among us in *sheep's* cloathing;



cloathing ; which being turned a little on one side, no sheep, but a ravenous animal is seen under it. I have plucked and examined some of the fruit which you bear ; and found it to be corrupt and evil—four grapes : What then must the *tree*, what the *vine* be ? When the grapes are grapes of *gall*, and the clusters so *bitter* ; probably the vine is of the vine of *Sodom*, and of the fields of *Gomorrha*—

You are in the opinion of many people, the more inexcusable in writing and publishing such a wicked libel against me, on account of the *time when it was done*—when I was engaged in a public controversy of great importance to the churches of New-England, as well as to the American heathen, and those British colonies which are almost destitute of the administration of God's word, worship and sacraments : and when I was employing my mean abilities to the utmost, to serve them—A work which I was repeatedly solicited to engage in by several Divines of the first reputation among us, some years before that incident took place, which finally determined me to undertake it. At this very time, you was planning or publishing mischief against me, as an enemy to the *most important principles* of the protestant religion ; and consequently, not only to these churches, but to christianity itself ! You have joined your slanders to those of my anonymous *episcopal* defamers ; you have brought the like accusation against me, and made use of the like dishonest arts to hurt my reputation. By publishing your libel at such a time, you have, to the utmost of *your power*, defeated the design of my writing on the subject before referred to ; and thereby diserved, as far as your influence reaches, the good cause I was labouring to promote ; in which you was also interested yourself. Some, I know, are of opinion, that *episcopal influence* had a share in bringing out your scandalous pamphlet at this time ; and that either you, or those with whom you have *close connexions*, have been tampered with, set on, and encouraged in the prosecution of this wicked design. I particularly remember

that in one of the many libels published against me by *that party*, there is something said about you and your then proposed pamphlet, apparently with this view.—And what reward do you expect from that quarter, for this furious attack upon me?—Perhaps to be made a BISHOP in America!——

If you suppose you are likely to gain any credit with ‘our Divines of indisputable ability,’ by this wicked piece of work; I have good reason to think the contrary. Some of them, (*Calvinistical Divines*) have spoken of you and your libel to me, with great contempt and indignation; and seem’d quite astonish’d at your assurance in setting up for an author; but more especially at the infamous arts which you had used to injure my reputation. Some of them said, they did not own you nor your *orthodoxy*. Even your Rev.<sup>d</sup> friend (or patron, shall I call him?) in Boston, who corrected the press for you; a gentleman who has signalized his zeal against some ministers accused of *arminianism*; who has encouraged the calling of counsels against them, and had a principal hand in their ecclesiastical *death*; and, let me add, who has more than once, in a pretty public manner, discovered his particular spleen against me; even this Rev’d gentleman, I say, was something shock’d at your unfairness at least, before your libel got through the press; when he came to perceive how grossly you had misrepresented and falsified my sermons; particularly in that most remarkable instance which has been taken notice of—Some persons of a more delicate conscience, or nicer sense of honor, would probably have had nothing to do with you or your libel, after such a discovery as this; but immediately put the affair out of their hands, lest they should be considered as *accessaries*. This Rev’d gentleman, however, went on with the *honourable* employment which you had assigned him; not having, as I am informed, either so much concern for his own reputation, or so much real friendship for you, as to send you word what he had discovered, in order to prevent the disgrace that was likely



to come upon you—But, that even this warm gentleman is now no advocate for your libel, or the most distinguishing principles of it, I can assure you upon good grounds.—Judge then, what Credit you are likely to gain among people in general, clergy and laity; whether they do, or do not agree with me in certain points of doctrine.—The zealous gentleman, to whom I referred, who has such a thirst for *unorthodox blood*, (I do not mean literally) would doubtless have highly extolled your performance, it being *against me*, had it been but *tolerable*; but it was too gross an abuse to go down even with him!—So that I do not think you will, on account of this *Essay*, very speedily have a call to preach the Convention-sermon before ‘our Divines of indisputable ability;’ as you very probably expected: For I know not what a man of your consummate vanity, may not be supposed to flatter himself with the hopes of!

I am sensible, it is the opinion of many, that you had not the *principal* hand in composing the libel to which your name is prefixed. Many suppose it to be *chiefly* the work of a certain lay-gentleman, unhappily bewilder’d for many years past, with law, military affairs, polemic divinity, metaphysicks, superstition, politics and *platform*, all crowding on his brain at once!—a man of a wily, jesuitical head and heart, at least *in some respects*;—full of whimsical designs and notions; and one who, to all his other unaccountable fancies, it is said, has added this strangest of all delusions, That he is an *eminent saint*, and that the churches of this country stand in great need of such an able pilot as himself, to steer them a right course!—It is known that, as distinguished and *candid* a writer as he has been *against ministers*, he labours under some *small* inconveniences as an author, never having learnt to *spell*; much less to put any thing into tolerable method.—Now it is supposed by some, that this truly extraordinary person, not being able to *contain himself*, and yet labouring under the *trivial* disadvantages afore-said, put his written, but unspelt, unconnected lucubrations

brations into your *learned* hands, to have those defects supplied : In consequence of which, and some additional strokes of your own, they appear to the world in such a wonderful order and method as is observed in the libel ; it having been previously agreed that, as the reward of your pains, you should have the *whole honour* of being the author of it. — No small piece of self-denial, to be sure, to the said original draughts-man ! This may be all mere conjecture, for any thing that I know ; but some are confident it is not. And one thing that affords ground of suspicion, is, that the said *modest* person extols the libel much more highly than, it is supposed, he would extol any man's performance, *except his own*. Now, Mr. Cleaveland, if you have really been led into such a *premunire* ; if you have been made what the vulgar call a *cat's paw*, and persuaded to father the *ill-favoured, sinful* child which you did not beget, but only fostered ; it may perhaps be most for your honor to confess the truth, and to bring out this whole piece of roguery. And if you should do so, you may be sure of one advantage on your side ; I mean, that tho' you are not better than you should be, yet none will, on this occasion, apply to you the old proverb, *That the worst KNAVE has turned King's evidence*. But at present I must take it for granted, that the libel is your's ; since you declare it to be so. It is upon supposition that you spake the truth *in this respect*, that I have proceeded in the reproof already given you. If I have not handled you very tenderly, or delicately, it was only because your case required some severity : You appear not a little *bardened*. Tho' I abhor falsehood and villainy, and have been treated so injuriously by you ; yet I would not have [you] imagine, that my reproofs proceed from a spirit of malice, or unchristian *revenge*. According to my principles, you know, chastizement should always have *good* for its proposed end, either private or public, or both. And altho' that which I have administred to you, may and must make you *smart* for a while, unless you are past *feeling* ; yet, to convince



convince you and the world, that I charitably intend it for your real benefit, I will now close this *epistle* ( which you may possibly think somewhat *tedious* ) with a few friendly and salutary pieces of advice.

In the first place, I advise you to humble yourself before almighty God ; and to implore his forgiveness thro' that *atonement*, of which you have so wickedly represented me as an *injurious asperser*.

In the next place, I counsel you to acknowledge your sin to the world ; by publishing an ample confession of the injustice you have done me, in the news-papers, or otherwise ; and thereby giving me reasonable satisfaction —It is my present determination never so much as to *read* any thing which you may publish hereafter, unless it is written in the *penitential way*, now recommended to you—After having shewn the world the falsehood and villainy of your *first Essay*, I shall think my own reputation intirely unconcerned in any thing you may hereafter say of me or my principles—

Thirdly, I advise you to be diligent in your studies, and to take pains in composing your sermons ; that there may be both useful matter and method in them ;—instead of preaching in that flashy, rambling and incoherent way, that I understand you do ; and for which our other modern *exhorters* have been so famous—Alas ! how much precious time did you mispend in writing your libel ! All which time, the poor people of *Ipswich*, I believe, fared miserably enough.

Fourthly, Whatever you do, Mr. *Cleaveland*, beware of mixing *metaphysics* with your divinity. Your libel shews that your head is almost turned therewith already ; which is the occasion of my giving you this caution. Preach the plain, indisputable doctrines and duties of the gospel, in a plain, familiar way. Do not exercise yourself in things *too high for you* : Aim at no great refinements, or very nice distinctions. Meddle as little as possible with abstruse, controversial points ; for which, I perceive, you have a huge appetite, without a digestion answerable thereto

thereto. Your head, if not your heart, is already much affected and hurt thereby ; and the consequence of your going on in this way, may be right down phrenzy !

Fifthly, Avoid all censoriousness ; all rash judging and condemning of others, whose religious opinions are different from yours. Preach your own sentiments honestly ; but you should not represent all those who dislike them, as graceless, unconverted men ; and enemies to the *most important* doctrines of christianity. A most fundamental principle of true *protestantism*, (for which you would be thought an advocate) is, that the holy scriptures are a sufficient, and the only rule of Christian faith ; and that all Christians have a right to judge of the sense of scripture for themselves. In this imperfect state there will unavoidably be some considerable diversity of opinion, even among wise and good men ; among true Christians and true Protestants ; and, perhaps, still more diversity in their manner of expressing themselves upon some particular points, than in their sentiments. You should not expect to bring all men to think and express themselves just as you do, Mr. *Cleaveland* ; much less pick a quarrel with, misrepresent, abuse and defame them, if they do not. Even *Calvinists* differ very considerably among themselves ; as appears particularly by what I cited to you from Dr. *Twisse*, relative to *satisfaction*. Christians should exercise forbearance and candor towards each other ; and Christian ministers (of whom, it seems, you reckon yourself one) ought to set the example.

Nothing is more unbecoming a minister of the gospel, Mr. *Cleaveland*, than a narrow and censorious, a captious and wrangling disposition : And they, in whom this evil temper prevails, generally promote it among their hearers ; inspiring them with antichristian rage and bitterness against their fellow-christians, instead of the meek, benign and charitable spirit of the gospel. I hope you will beware of this bad Spirit for the future.

If you put these counsels in practice, I am persuaded it will turn to good account ;---much better than for  
you



you to set up as a writer of controversy. It will be more for your own credit, and for the good of your parishioners. I say these things with hearty good-will to you and to them ; and request you at least seriously to consider, before you reject, the counsel. I should be sincerely glad, if by acting a part becoming a minister of the gospel (for the future) you should grow in the esteem of the people of your charge ; and heartily rejoice to hear that you was serviceable to the cause of pure and undefiled religion in *Ipswich* ;--to your present comfort, and future honor. I wish the divine blessing may attend both my reproofs and counsels, and your labors, so far as both are honest and laudable, or conformable to the spirit and rules of the gospel : And am, notwithstanding the injuries received from, and the needful rebukes given to you,

Your sincere WELL-WISHER,

J. Mayhew.

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## Advertisement.

**I***t is hinted in the foregoing Letter, that Mr. Cleaveland was formerly dismissed from Yale-College, in a way not to his credit. The author has heard this in such a manner, that he has not the least doubt of its truth. But if he should hereafter find himself in a mistake with reference hereto, he will give Mr. Cleaveland reasonable and public satisfaction in that respect, even without being called upon therefor.*

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THE END.

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them, and the needed labor given to you.



J. Mayhew.

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THE END



